

U.S. Congressman John W. Olver (D-1st District) announced that Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture (CISA) has been awarded a \$50,000 USDA Rural Development grant to fund its "Farm-to-Cafeteria" Initiative.

The funding was awarded by Congressman Olver at a press conference held today at Amherst College.

Speakers included U.S. Congressman John Olver; David Tuttle, USDA State Director for Rural Development; and Annie Cheatham, CISA's Executive Director.

Samples of local produce, fruit and jams from Czajkowski Farm were available.

Congressman Olver said, "With some of the best agricultural land in the nation, the Pioneer Valley has the potential to become a national leader in local food production."

"Institutional purchasing of locally grown food is a win-win for the community," said Annie Cheatham, CISA's Executive Director.

Charlie Thompson, the Director of Dining Services at Amherst College, said, "The college has been trying to increase the amount of locally grown food on its campus for several years."

Squash Trucking, Amherst College's primary produce supplier, brings locally grown food to the college's dining hall.

"It's better for the farmers, who don't have to worry about delivery. It's better for the customers who don't have to worry about food safety."

The USDA Rural Development grant will fund CISA's "Farm-to-Cafeteria" Initiative. Through the "Farm-to-Cafeteria" Initiative, CISA will purchase locally grown food from farmers in the Pioneer Valley to serve on the college's campus.

CISA is a non-profit organization based in South Deerfield that works to sustain agriculture in western Massachusetts.

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